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SEASON ON WATERFOWL REDUCED TO ONE MONTH

President Approves Emergency
Regulation Caused by Drought
on Breeding Areas

Because of disastrous conditions caused by prolonged drought, the season for hunting ducks, geese, brant, and coots throughout the United States and Alaska has been reduced to one month by an amendment to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act regulations, approved by the President to-day (August 25). The amendment becomes effective immediately, announces the Biological Survey of the United States Department of Agriculture, and it is anticipated that Canadian authorities will soon take similar action.

In the northern half of the country except Alaska, the season on ducks, geese, brant, and coot under the new regulations will open October 1, and in the South November 16, except in Florida, where it will begin November 20. The seasons on Wilson's snipe, or jacksnipe, sora, woodcock, and doves have not been changed.

The one month season from October 1 to October 31 applies to Maine, New-Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York (except Long Island), Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois, Missouri, Iowa, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, Idaho, Utah, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington.

The season from November 16 to December 15 applies to that part of New York known as Long Island, and to New Jersey, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee, Kentucky, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Arizona, and California. In Florida the season on these birds will be from November 20 to December 19. In Alaska the season will be from September 1 to September 30.

The drought that has necessitated curtailment of the season has occurred on the principal wild-fowl breeding grounds in northwestern United States and in western and southwestern Canada, the Biological Survey explains. The disappearance of sloughs and marshes from much of this great region has prevented the birds from rearing normal numbers of young, and as a result the annual flight of ducks and geese this fall is expected to be the poorest on record. These conditions observed during investigations conducted throughout the breeding period by representatives of the Governments of the United States and Canada over areas in southwestern Manitoba, southern Saskatchewan as far north as Saskatoon, and in Alberta westward to the Rocky Mountains and northward to Edmonton, convinced Federal and Dominion conservation officials that irreparable damage would result if measures were not adopted at once to reduce the kill and to preserve an adequate stock of birds for breeding.

Some ducks and geese breed throughout the watered regions of Canada and northwestern United States, yet according to the Biological Survey, the principal stocks of the more commonly hunted species come from the drought-affected region. In this region officials of the two governments found a serious shortage of birds, which, they state, will result in a great reduction in the numbers wintering in the United States.

Similar investigations throughout the northwestern part of the United States produced equally discouraging reports of disaster to the wild fowl. Investigations pushed by the Canadian Government even into remote subarctic regions failed to verify the belief of some that the ducks driven off their regular haunts by the drought had gone farther north to breed. Game conservation officials of both countries were practically unanimous in the opinion that the situation is so grave as to threaten disaster to the birds and permanent damage to the sport of wildfowling.

Experts point out that although the decrease of wild fowl will be general throughout this country during the fall and winter months, there probably will be scattered local areas where these birds will concentrate in large numbers. Such concentrations, however, should not be regarded as altogether encouraging manifestations, Federal game authorities warn, since the disappearance of many of the usual resting and feeding grounds will compel the birds to resort to the restricted areas where water and food conditions are favorable.

Under the provisions of the Migratory Bird Treaty with Great Britain, Biological Survey officials explain, the Department of Agriculture is charged with the protection and maintenance in this country of the birds that migrate to and from Canada. These officials, after studying the effect of conditions in the drought-stricken areas and considering all proposed solutions of the problem, have been convinced that the reduction of the shooting season prescribed by the amendment will safeguard the supply of ducks and geese if sportsmen and all others interested will cooperate to secure close observance of the regulation, as amended.